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ABSTRACT

The articles in this journal issue provide a rationale and methods for enhancing students' critical awareness of visual media and for a process approach to composition instruction. The titles of the articles and their authors are as follows: (1) "Reel English: Film Study in the High Schools" (James Griswold); (2) "Introducing History Media" (Michael W. Bergen); (3) "ERIC/RCS Report: Visual Literacy Comes of Age" (Hilary Taylor Holbrook); (4) "Conferencing: A Technique to Aid Writing Revision" (Connie Russell); (5) "Drama as Rehearsal for Writing" (Patrick M. Collins); and (6) "Revision: Blasting the Rock Face Open" (James P. Beck). Reviews of selected books for children, adolescents, and teachers are included. (HTH)

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VISUAL LITERACY/PROCESS WRITING

For English Teachers At All Levels
October, 1984 Volume 27, No. 1

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WISCONSIN ENGLISH JOURNAL

For English Teachers at All Levels

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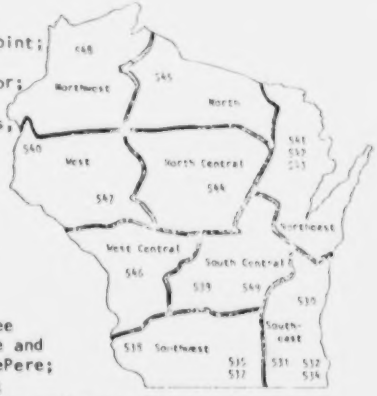

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26th Annual WCTE Convention

March 1-2, 1985

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Oconomowoc

Life Skills and Humanities: What Should People Learn

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CHISHOLM MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

CITATION FOR JOHN KEAN

To know Jack Kean, to observe him at committee meetings or conferences, to read his vita is to believe that he couldn't possibly be one person. The range and duration of his activities, interests and concerns goes beyond such words as commitment, energy and versatility. He expresses each of these and more.

Certainly his service to the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English--thus to the teachers of Wisconsin, has been extraordinary. Currently filling the role of Trust Officer, a role that requires him to moniter the funds of The Robert C. Pooley Foundation and chair the Foundation's research award committee, he has also served as WCTE's vice president and president. He has chaired or served on various committees, notably the Wisconsin Conference on English Education, the Committee on the Preparation and Certification of Teachers and, currently, the Censorship Committee. At executive committee meetings of the Council, he can be counted upon for his broad perspective, his insightful thinking and political-pedagogical acumen.

His work with the Wisconsin Council is but a part of his professional presence. He has been a consultant and directed numerous workshops across the state and nation. He has presented papers locally and for NCTE on such varied topics as preparation in language arts, writing activities, sexism, censorship and American Indian education. Directing the Wisconsin Writing Project (Madison) is a current major contribution.

Jack's publications are numerous, the list of papers--articles, chapters in books, reviews, research reports, monographs, and a book (The Language Arts: Teaching and Learning in the Elementary School) covering more than four pages. Thus it is evident that his is a national reputation, his expertise being recognized outside Wisconsin's borders.

Of course, he teaches in the traditional settings as well. He is a professor in the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Department of Curriculum and Instruction. He lists a dozen courses, undergraduate and graduate, that he currently teaches.

There can be no doubt that Jack Kean is a deserving recipient of The Chisholm Award for Meritorious Service to the English Profession.

--written by Nicholas J. Karolides, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

CREATIVE TEACHING AWARDS

The tenth Lucille S. Pooley Creative Teaching Award, sponsored by the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, was presented to James Griswold at the council's spring conference. Michael Bergen received the runner-up award; *see page 10.*

REEL ENGLISH–FILM STUDY IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS

JAMES GRISWOLD
Wauwatosa East/West High Schools

Take # Forty-three: Any Teachers Lounge

"My kids are driving me crazy, . . . I can't get them to do anything anymore."

"What are you teaching them?"

"Oh, the same old boring short stories from the text, how to organize a paragraph on summer vacation, things like that . . . what are you teaching your kids?"

"We're studying a film, applying the terms learned. . . ."

"Oh, you're showing a movie, how neat! I wish I could do that, but you *know* that isn't in the curriculum . . . I guess we all need a break once in a while . . . who will ever find out? . . . I'll never tell. Well, I've got to get back to my students to teach them some *real* English. Have fun!"

Neat. Isn't in the curriculum. A break. No one will ever find out. Real English.

How many times has film taken on a negative connotation, after teachers hear that their peers have shown movies used as epic intermissions, or have shown "curriculum" films that are sadly outdated and boring; while still others have shown films that have been confiscated from other department areas. True, film can be misused as a simple toy, having as detrimental an effect on students as their watching much of today's network prime-time television. However, if presented properly, the medium of cinema can provide a learning experience, catapulting at least some of the curriculum guidelines into an intellectual stratosphere, approaching the idealism of permanent retention.

The teacher, who is willing to work at presenting a classic film by extensive research before viewing, can reap the benefits of better classroom attitudes and overall increased interest toward the English subject. The instructor plodding through the text over and over again will find that his/her final test results might show very little comprehension or understanding, because the class and the teacher were simply turned off to the entire routine lecture approach of studying that particular genre. The study of film, as a valuable tool in teaching any curriculum, can be a primary motivating factor in education throughout the '80's. Now is the time to respect cinema for what it can potentially do, helping all of us in teaching our goals/objectives with renewed enthusiasm.

Unfortunately, television has also damaged film's reputation with frequent commercial interruptions that can slow down the pace and understanding of even the greatest of cinema art (videotape editing can remedy this). Also, parents, teachers, and students too often equate what they see in television shows with viewing a theatrical film in the classroom. Surprisingly, many watch a flitting image on a rectangular screen and nothing else. "The Dukes of Hazzard" is *not* "Citizen Kane." With the additional advent of videotape, videodiscs, and hours of cable viewing, the students of today should be critically educated viewers by tomorrow, or the regressive state of the media arts will only have worsened.

Choosing the Film

Hollywood has produced a number of classic films throughout the years, that not only entertained us, but also, taught us concepts about ourselves and our environment. Nevertheless, film/video catalogs (that I hope can be found in any high school or ordered through various companies) can be very deceptive in selling worthless trash, such as "Porkies" (1982), on the same critical level as the brilliant "The Bridge on the River Kwai" (1957). Before ordering any film a teacher must go to a library and research a film that will be appropriate, according to curriculum objectives that already frame the course's picture. The film book selections of any library will usually index many movie titles, so that if a particular theme or concept is mentioned in three or more books, then you can be relatively sure that the selected film is the one you want to order.

Censorship is a major problem in that most films are sent out to you without any cuts having been made. This is good (who would view the Mona Lisa sans smile!), but not practical--student maturity levels and the dictates of society warrant careful selection. If you have not seen the film in the past few months (or very possibly, never at all), then be sure to read up on it extensively, and preview it once it has arrived. One film that I was about to show to my freshman class several years back, as review for a three week study of a popular teenage novel, came to school one day early. The film/novel was "Bless the Beasts and the Children" (1972), and I decided to stay after school and watch the film for any major changes that could be discussed in our class study. My teaching license is intact today, because I judiciously sent the film back after viewing--it had over twenty obscenities and sexually suggestive scenes that would have had the students' parents howling, even though it was rated "PG." Perhaps surprisingly, I thought the film was a very good adaptation of the book, but the director, Stanley Kramer, had unfortunately decided to "spice it up a bit." A good guideline I have followed since then is to use the cutoff date of "1960"; before that year films made were relatively safe (of course, there are exceptions); if the film came out after that year, one better preview the entire movie before going ahead to show it.

Another aspect to examine here is the class climate composition. Do you have a class of immature freshmen this year or a class of college-bound seniors? The "feel" of the class can determine what their attitude will be toward a film, but don't be afraid to show them something challenging from 1935, rather than a piece of worthless fluff from 1967. Stay away from "entertainment only" films--students will enjoy these immensely, but then they could have just as easily watched one of them at home on T.V. without learning anything from the experience. Keep the students in mind at all times before choosing a film that is intellectually stimulating to you; it might be outright boring to a younger, less mature mind. Find a balance between entertainment and course objective application for success in appealing to the widest possible classroom strata.

After research, censorship, and class climate have been taken into account, it is time to make a list of "best" films and then order several from a film rental service. Unfortunately, because of budget restrictions and deadlines, you might find yourself ordering a film almost a year or more in advance of showing it. Once a pattern has been started, it shouldn't be hard to convince any department head or adminstrator to order more of these classic films, instead of the antiquated museum oldies that many times provide a naptime for students. Show other teachers in the department what has been accomplished from the work you have put into a film presentation, and maybe, they will help you to order more films to benefit all teachers in the department. In the past semester (Fall, 1983) I showed three films, but two is sufficient because of possible time restrictions, and the research that goes into showing each one.

Film Unit Objectives

The films I chose for this semester were Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds" (1963), John Huston's "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre" (1948), and Alfred Hitchcock's "Foreign Correspondent" (1940). While some teachers might say that "The Birds" is too violent to show in the classroom, it actually demonstrates why violence can be shown to make sense in the context of deeper psychological themes within an entire film's structure. "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre" examines the concept of greed as no other film, making the character change of Fred C. Dobbs (Humphrey Bogart) fascinating to watch and analyze. Finally, "Foreign Correspondent" is a spy-chase adventure with enough symbolism to workout any student who wants to find a deeper meaning in what ordinarily might be considered a light-weight entertainment. All three films can be examined with a focus on any one of what I consider five curriculum-orientated objectives:

A. To review (or teach) terminology normally covered in a literature unit. Whether the terms range from as simple as "plot" to as complex as "impressionism" many films can be found that are loaded with examples to clarify and reinforce the meanings to be examined. A question hand-out was used to examine symbolism in both "The Birds" and "Foreign Correspondent."

B. To examine a theme or themes within the structure of a film. This is an excellent way for students to demonstrate composition skills, by having them write a well-organized paper, using examples from the film to back up their statements.

C. To compare a film with the original novel/short story/play as a review, perhaps finding different perspectives between the director's and author's version of the same story. A class discussion could have been employed after having students read Daphne du Maurier's short story, "The Birds" and having them view the film.

D. To demonstrate the style of a director (such as Hitchcock, Ford, Minnelli, etc.) by examining two films from different periods in the director's creativity. This could be used as a lead in to discussing style in literature in more advanced courses of study. This was done with the two Hitchcock films by handing out a "style points" sheet on Hitchcock before viewing the films. Then, students watched for similar style examples in both movies. (Even films based on works by famous authors such as Mark Twain or Charles Dickens, could be examined before reading a *different* work by the same author.)

E. To study film as film, teaching concepts of cinematography, set design, casting, dialog (screenwriting), etc. before-hand, and then, demonstrat-

ing them all with just a single classic film. This could be incorporated as a separate film media unit of varying length. In examining the three films listed above, points were brought out on handout sheets for students to watch for before viewing the film. They were required to search for various technical elements in the film and write them down in short essay answer form. For example, the method of lighting the spectacular windmill set in "Foreign Correspondent" was done to achieve the feeling of loneliness and mystery.

Film Presentation Format

Once an objective or objectives have been chosen, a method of presentation should be generally followed to achieve the maximum results in the shortest amount of time. A one day pre-discussion should take place, where background handout sheets can be given to the students, read and discussed, along with the assignment required of the students at the end of the film unit. Next is the viewing of the film itself (usually taking three or four class periods), along with note-taking either during the film or as an assignment for homework each evening. After viewing the film, a one day post-discussion should take place to discuss other various aspects of the film, along with some hints and help on the assigned paper to be turned in the next day. Finally, the assignment should be collected (no later than a day or two after the last discussion), including all notes and scratch copies students may have. Through all of these procedures the enthusiasm of the teacher is most important as to whether or not the final discussion sparks with mature insight, and the assignment has evolved into a work of motivation on the part of the students involved.

Besides the final assignment due on any particular film, a teacher can also give a short test and certainly add a film section to any final exam. As the year progresses references should be made, whenever possible, to concepts taught or emphasized in the various film mini-units. Like any area of study, reinforcement makes the effort worthwhile and lasting for student and teacher alike.

The Last Reel

Any English curriculum needs creative units to provide an impetus to learning subject material normally found only in books. If the results of units such as film study, produces results like I obtained in the classroom, then more students will be inspired to take other courses in literature, writing, mass communication, etc.

As tomorrow's teenagers head toward college, where many English term papers center on critical analysis of various literary genres, maybe, film study will have been one of the first steppingstones to understanding what was "good" or "bad" about *any* piece of artistic expression. Then with a glance back a student might suddenly understand the significance of why Wayne rode off into the sunset, or why Garland went to somewhere over the rainbow.

Sample Materials

Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980)--one of the world's greatest directors

Hitchcock. The name conjures up words like suspense, mystery, spinetingling tension, and the action fun that is part of every movie thriller. Hitchcock films express our fears on a grand scale. Using unique camera angles and incredibly complex editing procedures, Hitchcock has created a world where we (the audience) are the participants in a common phobia (fear) . . . The helpless hero on the screen experiences this fear for us in graphic scenes of stark realism. . . . Following is a list of common elements in many of Hitchcock's films, a total of 53.

1. The fear of police.
2. A skeptical, pessimistic view of the world.
3. The sense of being trapped by forces and events over which one has no control--uneasiness and anxiety.
4. The use of distorted and obviously unreal backdrops.
5. Long, complex, elegant movement (camera).
6. Extended exercise in suspense rather than a quick surprise.
7. Black humor with macabre or morbid undertones.
8. The use of the MacGuffin-a device or item that the audience concentrates on only to discard it by the time the movie is over.
9. Technical effects that draw attention to themselves, yet underline some high spot in the drama.
10. Audience takes the side of the "villain" at times.
11. Total loneliness and desolation.
12. Cool, beautiful blonde women who "warm up" by the end of the movie.
13. A bumbling "hero" who stumbles into spectacular problems.
14. The fall from a high place, usually a national landmark.
15. Sharp, vivid photography.
16. Music that underlines the suspenseful scenes.
17. Hitch appears very briefly (sometimes just for one second) in almost every one of his films.

Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds" (1963) Universal Color 120 minutes

Screenplay: Evan Hunter, from the work by Daphne du Maurier
Special Effects: Lawrence A. Hampton and Ub Iwerks
Sound: Bernard Hermann

Actors: Rod Taylor (Mitch Brenner), Tippi Hedren (Melanie Daniels), Jessica Tandy (Mrs. Brenner), Suzanne Pleshette (Annie Hayworth), Veronica Cartwright (Cathy Brenner), Ethel Griffies (Mrs. Bundy), Charles McGraw (Sebastien Sholes), Ruth McDevitt (Mrs. MacGruder)

After *Psycho*, Hitchcock undertook a project which, because of its demanding technical requirements and execution of special effects, took three years of preparation before its final release . . .

Hitchcock realized that after *Psycho* people would be expecting him to top himself, and he did. There were some 370 trick shots in the film, and the last scene alone took 32 different pieces of film to create a scene in which thousands of birds sit as far as the eye could see.

Although Hitchcock employs music to enhance the cinematic effects he creates on screen, for *The Birds* he asked his favorite composer, Bernard Herrmann, not to write music but instead to be a sound consultant. Replacing the expected musical score is an electronic one, simulated sounds for bird cries and wing-flapping . . .

The property appealed to Hitchcock because the birds who descend upon man in the story are not birds of prey but ordinary birds that, up until then have lived in harmony with man. Of course the whole thing is a fantasy and the audience doesn't really believe that such a thing could happen, but Hitchcock has us almost convinced by the end that anything is possible. Daphne du Maurier based her short tale of horror on factual incidents and since *The Birds* has been released, many similar occurrences have been reported throughout the country . . .

The Birds was shot on location in Bodega Bay and San Francisco, with studio work completed at Universal City. In addition to the vast array of specially trained birds, Hitchcock also introduced his new discovery. Her name was Tippi Hedren, a former model who Hitchcock thought could be the new Grace Kelly. A statuesque blond with a frozen expression, Ms. Hedren possessed the classic Hitchcockian beauty and lacked only the ability to act . . . though this is debatable.

(Hitchcock speaking) What you have in *The Birds* is a kind of overall sketchy theme of everyone taking nature for granted. Everyone took the birds for granted until the birds one day turned on them. The birds had been shot at, eaten, put in

cages--they'd suffered everything from the humans and it was time they turned on them. Now there was no repulse. The hero was helpless against them, because they were now a collective army. That's why we had an opening which was very lightweight, frivolous, expressing the thought that everybody too easily takes life for granted. The girl's a cocktail-party-going girl with not much upstairs--she's frivolous, well-to-do, and suddenly she gets a dose of nature which pulls her up and everyone else as well. I would say the theme of *The Birds* is don't mess about or tamper with nature...

Even during the shooting he (Hitchcock) never hesitated to help her (Ms. Hedren) along, to discuss all aspects of her role with her. On only one occasion did he put his foot down. She wanted to know, reasonably, what ever possessed her character, Melanie, to venture out of her room at night and up to the attic when she must be certain something terrible was waiting there. Of course, there was no reasonable answer except, "Because I told you to." And that, she felt, was for once in a picture fair enough. Though she would certainly rather have avoided what was waiting for her at the top of the stairs; an attack by birds which had to be shot with live instead of mechanical birds, as originally intended! The trouble with mechanical birds was that they just did not look lifelike. So for a whole week she had to suffer daily having live seagulls thrown at her in very narrow confines, and then later to lie on the floor with frantic birds tied with elastic bands and nylon threads to her arms and legs. It was, she says, the worst week of her life, but she went through it without complaint, and only became hysterical when a bird nearly clawed out one eye . . .

. . . Hitchcock was always moving deeper inside the characters, making the viewpoint far more subjective than he had originally intended, and in particular keeping the audience much closer to the Tippi Hedren character, Melanie, seeing things more or less through her eyes.

It is this which imparts such a strong emotional quality to a film which might easily have remained, in other hands, a brilliant but rather arid exercise in technical virtuosity. Technical virtuosity there is in plenty, sequence after sequence in which the audience, once given a chance to think, is bound to wonder how on earth the effects were produced. But within the movie the audience is given precious little chance to stop and think. And though the over-all vision of the film is apocalyptic (ending in no hope for the future), there is room also for some typically ruthless Hitchcock humor . . .

The three sections above were taken from--
Hitch by John Russell Taylor
The Films of Alfred Hitchcock by Robert A. Harris & Michael S. Lasky
The Men Who Made the Movies by Richard Schickel

Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds" (Questions to be answered on looseleaf)

1. Like "Psycho," "The Birds" first 45 minutes almost form a separate plot. What *is* the story in this early section?

2. Many times in "The Birds" people poke at and examine numerous birds in cages. Are there any scenes where the birds poke at people in cages of their own? Explain with examples.

3. Hitchcock directed a few of his characters in the film to *react like and look like* birds themselves. Can you point out examples of this?

4. How does the peacefulness of the little town of Bodega Bay make this movie work? What would have been lost if this movie would have been totally shot in San Francisco?

5. The biggest complaint of many critics was Tippi Hedren's "inability to act." Do you agree with this or do you think her type of acting was part of Hitchcock's planning? Explain with examples.

6. "The Birds" final seconds were a disappointment to many people, audience and critics alike. After viewing it do you agree? Why or why not? (Be sure to ask me about the ending that Universal refused Hitchcock to include.)

7. Here is the only Hitchcock movie without music--does this help the movie or ruin it?

8. Is there any humor in this film? Where? (what scenes particularly?)

9. How is this movie like Steven Spielberg's "Jaws"? (what scenes particularly?)

10. How do you think the special effects were done in this film? Explain with examples the various techniques used.

Visual Literacy

Continued from page 18

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Drama as Rehearsal for Writing

Continued from page 26

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INTRODUCING HISTORY MEDIA

MICHAEL W. BERGEN
Appleton High School East

"History Media class?" Parents in Appleton, Wisconsin, are frequently bemused when their sophomore sons and daughters elect to fulfill their American Literature-U.S. History requirements by enrolling in this team taught two-hour course.

"What about reading American literature?" questions one.

"What about your writing skills?" exclaims the other.

"Are you going to spend one *hour* every day just watching movies?" they shriek in unison.

Any self-respecting teenager should immediately refer mom and dad to the high school guidance department (if not a psychiatric ward for hysterics); they will discover that History-media was developed some thirteen years ago by a former history teacher, now the assistant principal of a junior high school, and by an ex-English teacher who shuffled off to Buffalo as a TV news director. The course currently is taught by William F. Reinke, with Masters in both History and English, and by Michael W. Bergen, with Masters in Theology and Humanities. We proudly proclaim:

"Yes! You will read American Literature!"

"Yes! You will write frequently in Media; and during any pause you will be writing in history."

And, "Yes, Media is carefully integrated to enhance and enrich the learning experience."

We begin the year, as do most American Literature-American History courses, with the Pilgrims. Media begins by having the students free-write as though they were Puritan teenagers in England during the Renaissance. This will build toward several assignments. The history teacher will require a diary from the students, written as one of the lifestyle choices of that time period. In media, we will be preparing a persuasive essay, "Is the Puritan Ethic Still Relevant?" Toward that end we will employ several of the ideas of J. Doyle Casteel and Robert J. Stahl, *Value Clarification in the Classroom: A Primer* (Goodyear Publishing Co., Inc., Santa Monica, CA 1975). The comprehension phase involves topical, empirical, interpretive, defining, and clarifying statements regarding several experiences with the Puritans. The relationship phase follows: seeing relationships between the values of the Puritans and our values, between their actions and our actions. This prepares us for the third phase, the valuation phase. This phase involves preferences, consequences, criteria, imperative statements (ought or ought not), and emotional statements.

For example, we examine what the Pilgrims wore and what the hardships of their trip over might have been. After a ten minute free-write, we begin reading William Bradford's "Mayflower Compact" and his "History of the Plymouth Plantation." We read much of it aloud and assign the rest as

homework. We follow our reading with the experience of the movie. The CBS film of "The Mayflower" played coincidently on TV last year and on Cinemax this year. The students are amazed at how much the movie (by J.S. Barrett) makes of those few lines of William Bradford. The film shows the problems of the Puritans before they left England and the greater problems aboard the Mayflower. The film ends with their arrival in the new country, and our anthologies continue with the problems experienced on land. The students are shocked to see the film leave out the Mayflower Compact. We explore why. The students decide that the "Compact" is little more than an oath and too abstract for the mass audiences to absorb anyway. It probably would be "boring" and we know TV does not dare get boring.

We deliberately postpone teaching the students dramatic structure before viewing. We want to hear or read what they have already noticed themselves. Many of them have been taught the ingredients of plot drama and we want to see whether they can transfer without reviewing. A few are quick to recognize the basic conflict (without which television and film would be lost) between the Captain of the ship (Anthony Hopkins) and the minister (Richard Crenna) who has been stowed away aboard the ship. Their people (the crew and the Pilgrims) are in constant conflict. A pair of shipboard romances add a third conflict. Miles Standish flirts with a Pilgrim girl, Priscilla Mullins (Jenny Agutter), while his wife (Trish VandeVere), dying of consumption, is selecting the Pilgrim girl as her replacement. The Pilgrim girl finds a younger man (Michael Beck) to her liking.

A similar and expanding film experience is available from Learning Corporation of America, 1350 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10019. It is part of the series entitled *The American Experience*. The first two episodes are entitled "The Puritan Experience: Forsaking England and Making a New World." They are one half hour each and are directed by Richard Marquand, who just directed *Return of the Jedi*. In these two episodes, the Higgins (played by Sian Phillips and David Warner) decide to leave England for America. The first episodes illustrate well the confusion experienced by the people of England with the state religion changing with each monarch and the influence of the various reformers. The film shows extremely well how these rich people are going to have to adjust to the cruelty of the new life in America. In the second episode, the Higgins have established roots in America, but they are still not happy in New England. Their daughter Charity, now a teenager, has just been rescued from an Indian tribe. Since she spent considerable time with the Indians, she has much respect for her former captors and is later arrested because she has fed one of the savages. As their daughter is placed in stocks, the Higgins decide to forsake the colony. We asked each student to assume a character role in the two movies and respond to what happened to him or her. Were the colonists correct in their attitudes toward the Indians? Have we learned anything about treatment of those who are different growing up in a community today?

We follow this with a pre-writing exercise of listing--listing various things that could happen to a Puritan and various things that could be used or seen by the Puritan. The lists get quite long. We can rank the list elements also as to value of importance. The lists will also come in handy for the Puritan writing assignment. With what limited experience we have had as Puritans, we are ready to get much more involved. We will want to read more. Our anthologies offer Anne Bradstreet, Roger Williams and Jonathan Edwards. We examine why Roger Williams was run out of the colony. We take the students back to the media we viewed and we ask some important questions: Did the writers have any particular points they wanted to make? Can we still be sure we know the Puritans or are we seeing just what the author and director allow us to see? After we have explored these two

issues, we explore perception and interpretation problems with dramatic history. Media, therefore, becomes the most painless way to study history and rhetoric. Continuing class discussion explores how the media follow literary structure, dramatic structure and limitations of expertise and production costs."

We are ready to take a look at four hours of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, as filmed for television by Rich Hauser for our Public Broadcasting System. Ordinarily in preparation, we review the dramatic structure, opening situation, rising action, climax and denouement. In this case of *The Scarlet Letter*, we like to introduce the students to the Gothic romance. Although it is slightly distracting from our Puritan theme to have them read and study Hawthorne's "Rappacinni's Daughter," we find it makes the Gothic Romance element most clear and the students enjoy the film version by Herbert Hartig, from the *American Short Story* series. Dell's text includes the original short story and the script. It is most important for the students to recognize that we have departed from a chronological approach to the Puritans and are now taking a thematic look at how other authors perceive the time period (perception and interpretation of dramatic history). The Gothic romance and the novel are much more modern devices as well. The innocent stranger, death by a mysterious cause, a villain who is a mad scientist, a note/curse, a picture or symbol, blood and a fear of questions are familiar to all of our students, thanks to Hollywood and television.

Another important observation about Hawthorne is that he grew up in Boston during another Renaissance, one hundred years after the Puritans. Recent, perhaps revisionist, research reveals a different Hawthorne than the author my teachers gave me. A film "Nathaniel Hawthorne: Light in the Shadows" (International Film Bureau, 332 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60604), shows just what kind of author he might have been and what he might have had as his purpose. Students find this the most exciting early knowledge in History-Media: authors have values and sometimes those values become their purpose in writing. I do not understand why this is such a revelation, but they revel in it.

During the viewing of *The Scarlet Letter*, we ask the student to keep a journal of reactions to the various events. Needless to say, their reactions to the treatment of an adultress, the fallen minister, and the vengeful husband awaken great responses. (My most recent surprise was student reaction to home viewing of *Thorn Birds* which is an Australian update of *The Scarlet Letter*.) A whole day (two class hours) is spent writing and discussing our reactions, clarifying our values and doing pre-writing activities and sharing them with future peer evaluators and the class in general. The history teacher reviews the historical accuracy of the story, and we try to see what kind of man the author might have been. The students decide whether Hawthorne was advocating anything by the eventual results of the plot.

The next three individual class hours of media are spent reading Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* aloud. A Caedmon recording of the play provides opportunity to listen to a professional interpretation and compare impact. Before listening, we read the first act aloud. We wish to give class faces and personalities to the play's characters to make our listening easier. In this reading, slow readers frequently demonstrate their limitations in oral interpretation. Arthur Miller's grammar and vocabulary are difficult. He was deliberately trying to capture the grammar of the 17th century and we want to see how our language has changed as well as to improve reading skills.

We then examine Arthur Miller, who visits the class by means of a film called, "Arthur Miller on Home Ground," in which he shows the audience his various homes and why he wrote all of his works. Surprisingly, the students enjoy watching Mr. Miller and his explanation of *Advocacy*. We then spend several days discussing advocacy and the artist's point of view. The history teacher and the English teacher informally debate advocacy. We bring in an artist who advocates problem-solving techniques. The artist, Chuck Mitchell, folk singer and welcome guest in this classroom uses his art to advocate arms reduction.

Now the students are close to being ready to write formally. A month has passed since school started. It is mid-quarter and it is time to see whether they have absorbed anything. A traditional test to see whether they still retain the author, the characters and methods of preparing the dramatic media is used. An in-class essay "Is the Puritan Ethic Still Relevant" is written. Fortunately, help can be found in *The Christian Science Monitor* and other sources such as Ann Landers, who explore this topic in editorials annually for Labor Day (the Work Ethic) and Thanksgiving. The students, again surprised at the relevancy of their subject matter, start watching the papers and magazines for additional examples.

Looping what we have written follows: The students prepare a sentence summary of what we have written and start again. We then ask our students to try to explore some aspect of this unit themselves. We write, we write, and write some more. We share with each other, and they do peer evaluations using prepared worksheets. After two hours of this, we attempt to work on a second last draft. The students check each others' second to final draft for mechanical errors on the third day and then their "masterpieces" are collected. Their masterpieces sit for two weeks while we move on to our media study. The students in the meantime are stunned. When are we going to get our papers back? We don't tell them these were only the second to final drafts. We are giving them time to refocus before looking at their original work. In the meantime focus is now turned to improvise use of transitions in writing and other rewriting skills. Both teachers also share their efforts at writing and rewriting--even the various stages of this article.

At this time, the class of fifty students is split in half and in half again. They will now have four classes. They will have History, Media, IMC and IS. IMC is Instructional Materials Center and IS is Independent Study. The two-hours class is now broken down into four twenty-five minute classes and our IMC research librarian runs all of the students through a refresher course using the IMC's resources. She is Mrs. Jane Azzi, who enjoys teaching history in addition to being a great librarian. She teaches the review using trivia contests. The students culminate the activity by creating trivia for the next year's teams and by evaluating their own work and the work of the rest of their team.

We now have the essential qualities of History-Media: an examination of historical periods as seen through the media, an examination of the roles played by the various media in those historical periods, co-operation of teachers in instruction, evaluation of self and peers, use of the writing process, and production of student media.

Our first production could be a newspaper or a news-magazine. The media teacher's responsibility is to teach the journalism skills needed while the history teacher provides the information needed to do the research. Exposure to the newspaper styles (straight, editorial, and feature) is followed by writing stories and editing each other's work. We do layouts and

type our own stories for publication. Patriot Press, our school print shop, prints our publication with the help of Mr. Ron Odegaard.

We also produce a television newscast on one of the periods of American history. Scripting, story types, use of studio, and techniques are taught. Our media librarian, Mr. Barry Bauscheck, prepares the media facilities; he also prepares the students in photography (35mm) and dark room. We may do television news programs on the Puritans, the American Revolution, the West or one of the wars. While we are producing these programs in our small groups in the studio, the remaining students are continuing with history.

In another thematic study, we examine the role played by Hollywood in shaping American values with the Western movie. We study the western short story and require a short story of each student, following the same approach used in writing the Puritan essay. Our subsequent war unit includes a study of Hollywood's war films and their effort to support the war. We examine how Hollywood also perpetuated the Puritan myth with its emphasis on good versus evil in their sterotyped genre films. The students write. We search research papers which are used to explore the changes in the genre films.

Two remaining activities absorb the remainder of the school year. Since we have taught interviewing for the newspaper feature and role playing for the historical newscasts, we continue this activity with an oral history unit on the roaring twenties and the great depression. This is done by contacting an old timer, researching the time period, and preparing questions. The oral histories are sound-taped, transcribed, and preserved for future classes or for the local historical society. We consider it a responsibility to involve our community in the study of American history. It is especially easy since our community has a strong sense of its history.

Our culminating activity is our presidential campaign unit. After examining the recent presidential campaigns and their increasing dependence on the media and reading Joe McGinnis's *Selling of the President 1968*, we run four of our students for president. After a review of the various party platforms, we establish the campaign issues. We study poll-taking, press releases, speech writing, and we prepare our press conferences. The opposing teams become the press and debate takes place. We write and produce presidential radio and TV commercials employing the various propaganda devices. We also prepare a video tape of the candidates' campaign speeches. Using the other class of History-Media as the electorate, we vote. The results are always surprising. The individual and group evaluations are the most exciting. It is fun watching students complain and praise each other for their contributions. (We have also given them marketable job skills in journalism, public relations and media. We are seeing more and more of our graduates turning to the media for a career.)

In conclusion, we have the support of students and administration. "Until I took this course I hated writing. Now I love it." This unsolicited recommendation by one of our best students of last year expresses the communicative arts responsibilities of a team-taught approach to American history and American writing. What do we do that causes students to love to write by the time we finish? I am not sure all of them do love to write, but sufficient numbers who do help us recruit and the elective course continues each year. Our administration supports us. Assistant Principal George Groy, who fathered the History-Media course, still calls it "the only way to teach the required junior American History and American Literature."

ERIC/RCS REPORT: VISUAL LITERACY COMES OF AGE

HILARY TAYLOR HOLBROOK

"Something there is in our intellectual
culture that doesn't like a picture."
Calvin Skaggs

"Back to basics" advocates who dismiss visual media courses as frivolous would not view kindly the idea that literacy in the visual media of television, film, and advertising is no less important to a solid education than are reading and writing. But even critics of curricula not grounded solely in the classic works of literature or the fundamentals of grammar and composition must acknowledge that the visual media, so pervasive in society as to be inescapable, are an influential force that shapes perceptions of reality, history, and society. In the face of such influence it would seem prudent to rethink curricula in terms of an appropriately broader literacy. Within this broader literacy, students should be made aware of the scope and power of these media, and learn to be discriminating consumers if they are not to be manipulated or deceived [Wagschal, ED 239 833; Gnizak and Girshman, CS 007 238].

Although the "basics" trend is an effort to abate verbal illiteracy, verbal and visual literacy are, to a high degree, inseparable. According to Skaggs, "One cannot increase visual literacy without enriching verbal literacy. It may also be argued that we can no longer achieve verbal literacy among our youth without attempting systematically to achieve a higher level of visual literacy."

English appears to be the discipline best equipped to impart visual literacy. Its primary concern has been transmission of general culture, of which the visual media are a major vehicle. It is also primarily responsible for teaching skills of critical analysis--elements of theme, plot, character, and style that are present in a sitcom, movie, or advertisement, as much as in a novel. This paper presents a case for visual literacy in the English curriculum, supported by materials from the ERIC system, and looks at activities and methods for developing such literacy.

TELEVISION: WASTELAND OR FRONTIER?

Foster observes that students have three choices regarding television viewing: don't watch it at all, watch all they want, or watch it moderately with critical understanding and appreciation. With compelling arguments he dismisses the first two as unrealistic and dangerous, respectively. Among the mind boggling statistics he cites are the 95 percent (74 million) of households with television sets, more than have refrigerators, stoves, or indoor plumbing. He also notes television's effect on behavior, value systems, and perceptions of reality, effects that are immediate and dramatic, or subtle and cumulative over a lifetime. That leaves choice three.

One of television's least obvious advantages, according to Levinson [CS 504 288] is that the ability to discern television's strengths and weaknesses *is* teachable. Furthermore, this skill is self-perpetuating with every new program or commercial.

Among the discussion questions suggested by Harold Foster are the following:

--Does television create violence in our society or does it reflect the violence already present?

--Does television news accurately reflect the world?

--Can too much viewing harm an individual?

Foster also proposes exploring television myths such as the detective show (might makes right), the western (good and evil were more discernable in the "old days"), or the sociology of sport.

FILM--LARGER THAN LIFE

Presumably because "movies are for entertainment" (Where does that leave literature?), film studies have been a conspicuous target for curriculum critics; but like it or not, the movies are here to stay. The demise of the neighborhood theatre at the hands of cable television and the economy not withstanding, it is the personal isolation and "larger than life" quality of the big screen experience that lend films their attraction and their persuasive qualities. Gnizak and Girshman [CS 007 238] describe a film curriculum designed for grades nine and ten that uses both English teachers and media specialists. The course challenges the notion that when one watches a movie one does not have to think. Students complete composition, reading comprehension, and drama/poetry exercises, as well as develop a script that they subsequently film.

Another way to use film study as a stimulus rather than an end in itself is to focus on literary works that have been made into movies, examining which of the two the students find better (students may be surprised to discover that very often the book is better than the film), how the two differed, and how having first seen the movie influenced the way they read the story and vice versa.

Foster also suggests that awareness of the structural elements of film--editing, movement, composition, camera angle, color, lighting, and sound as they are used to manipulate emotional response--is a significant factor in visual literacy.

ADVERTISING: THE HARDEST SELL

To serve as an example of the overwhelming influence that advertising exerts on social patterns, Ewen [ED 137 804] cites advertising as the tool with which manufacturing and industry have altered the character of daily living from productive to consumptive. Pressure from consumer advertising during the 1950s and 1960s created the "feminine ideal" of the housewife who remained at home, preparing prepackaged meals in a kitchen filled with state-of-the-art appliances and using all the newest health and beauty products to maintain youth and beauty for her husband. Such advertising has also been indicted as a catalyst for the national obsession with being thin.

Studies by Moore and others [ED 219 753; ED 165 182] on the effects of advertising and media consumer behavior on adolescents indicate that susceptibility to the persuasion of advertising is positively related to the amount of mass media use and the amount of communication with family and friends about matters of consumption (the higher the media use and the more discussion, the lower the susceptibility), and negatively correlated

to age and socioeconomic status (the younger the consumer and the lower the socioeconomic status, the higher the susceptibility). The researchers also found that *retention* of advertising information was positively related to age, amount of communication with family and friends about consumerism, and socioeconomic status.

Bennett [ED 159 728] brings attention to two forms of advertising other than product advertising that warrant study: corporate-sponsored image and ideology advertising (the propagation of ideas and controversial social issues in a manner that supports the interests of the sponsor while downgrading the sponsor's opponents, such as power company interests in nuclear power).

To counter the effects of various kinds of advertising, teachers have developed a variety of effective classroom practices.

Braden and Walker [ED 212 294] refer to advertising as a most effective symbiotic use of words and visuals. "Trademarks and corporate logos have become part of our visual vocabulary. The pages of almost any slick magazine will reveal visual-verbal combinations that turn the verbal metaphor into a visualized attention getter."

The persuasive language used in such advertising can be an excellent tool for teaching rhetoric, according to Stone [ED 166 701]. Since advertising demonstrates creative and admirable as well as corrupted uses of the English language, it can serve as the core of a composition unit, to teach students variety in diction, connotations, sentence structure, openings, use of detail, economy of expression, the sound of language, awareness of the reinforcement that words and pictures give each other, and persuasion through indirection. (Why is "No brand cleans better than Brand X" not the same as "Brand X cleans better than any other brand"?)

Vertin [ED 190 424] describes an individualized unit for study in advertising, developed for the junior high level. The teacher's guide and student booklet are designed to teach students to identify the different sources and types of advertisements, to recognize the main purposes of advertisements, and to analyze the purchasing powers behind the basic advertisement.

A section of Webb's paper on consumer education activities [ED 214 847] examines common advertising gimmicks, and provides related activities for secondary students, including finding examples of advertising ploys such as "weasel words," the "scientific claim," or "superstar endorsement."

Finally, a junior and senior high school media literacy curriculum guide [Bhakuni, et al., ED 211 973], written by participants in a summer workshop on media literacy, focuses primarily on manipulation in advertising. The four advertising lessons cover (1) advertising as manipulation, (2) the power of television commercials, (3) propaganda techniques used in media advertising, and (4) how advertisements persuade through words. The guide also lists goals for media literacy, includes a television viewing questionnaire, and outlines several media projects.

A VISUAL CURRICULUM

Clearly, the need for media literacy exists, as do the materials for incorporating such instruction into the English curriculum without sacrificing more "fundamental" components. Burbank and Pett survey eight successful visual literacy programs from the United States, Canada, Eng-

land, and Australia. The experience of one such program indicated that visual literacy is within the financial capabilities of school systems and, if properly carried out, will be supported locally. In many instances, small pilot efforts in one classroom or one school have grown into major projects involving teachers throughout the school system. The ERIC system contains other curriculum materials dealing with television, advertising, and film study, which can be found by using the thesaurus descriptors VISUAL LITERACY, ADVERTISING, FILM STUDY, and TELEVISION.

If the "basics" are those minimal skills necessary to function as an adult in society, then it follows that the ability to interpret information intelligently in a society that is becoming increasing visual is not only basic, but also essential.

ERIC/RCS is a federally funded Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, sponsored by NCTE. For further information about ERIC as a research resource, write User Services, ERIC/RCS, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

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Abstracts of materials selected for dissemination by ERIC are published monthly in Resources in Education (RIE). The materials are identified by ED numbers and are available in either microfiche or paper form from libraries or the ERIC Document Reproduction Service, (EDRS), P.O. Box 190, Arlington, Virginia 22210. Documents recently acquired by ERIC/RCS are identified by CS numbers; they will be announced in forthcoming issues of RIE.

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JARVIS BUSH COMPOSITION TEACHING AWARD

The 1984 Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English Jarvis Bush Award for Successful Techniques in Teaching Composition was awarded to Connie Russell.

CONFERENCING: A TECHNIQUE TO AID WRITING REVISION

CONNIE RUSSELL
Black Elementary School, Eau Claire

Although writing is being taught as a process in many classrooms, the lack of content revision in student writing continues to plague teachers. Many attempts at teaching students how to revise result in minor corrections or proofreading for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

I have found conferencing, a technique introduced to me by Lucy Calkins, to be the single most effective method to teach my students how to revise content when they write and, thereby, improve their writing.

Conferencing denotes a type of critiquing whereby a peer or the teacher questions students about the content of their writing. This questioning aids children in the subsequent revision of their drafts.

I begin the year by modeling conferencing. As students volunteer to read their drafts orally, I question them about missing details or parts I don't understand. The class listens to these conferences. My questioning often reflects lessons I have taught, such as "showing instead of telling," narrowing of topic, good leads and closings, use of senses and imagery, controlled use of dialogue, and others. The students are encouraged to ask questions of the writer, too. After five or six weeks, many children are adept at questioning and are able to meet in small groups or with one partner and conference without my aid. I continue to meet on a one-to-one basis or in small groups with children who are not confident at this point about their conferencing skills. Within a few weeks, all of the students are able to conference quite effectively. Following these conferences, students return to their seats and revise, using a "cut and tape" method to save time.

I had several objectives when introducing this technique. First and most important, I wanted to improve the quality of student writing and knew that encouraging more drafts and the revision of drafts would make writing better.

I also wanted the students to understand that revision was a necessary part of the writing process for all writers and that revision of content took place before final proofreading and correcting of mechanical errors. I sometimes write with the children and conference on my own writing to show them that I revise to improve my writing just as they do.

I wanted to stress ownership of writing and believed the questioning method used in conferencing leaves the choice of what to add, delete, or change to the writer. That choice gives the writers responsibility for and control of their writing. They must also be aware of their audience as representatives of that audience have been conference partners.

Another goal was to improve critical thinking skills and, although little research verifies this improvement, I believe the act of conferencing and revising develops these thinking skills. The types of questions children ask of each other and the types of revisions they make reflect the use of these skills.

As I have worked with conferencing in my classroom, I have learned to use several different methods to evaluate its effectiveness. First, since all drafts are dated and kept in student writing folders, I am able to compare earlier drafts with final drafts. In nearly all instances, revision has improved the quality of writing. Comparing these drafts also shows me the types of revisions the students are making. I find my sixth graders adding to their pieces, cutting material, rewording, changing sequence, replacing adjectives and adverbs with precise verbs, redirecting their focus, and combining sentences.

I also have the children record their conferences with the use of cassette tape recorders when the technique is new to them. This method leaves me free to work with students during the writing period but monitor conference sessions by playing back the tapes at my convenience. When I find a student having problems with conferencing, I can then include that child in small group conferences or in my own one-to-one conferences with other children until I am sure the child has gained confidence and skill in questioning.

Taping has also given me the opportunity to discover the types of questions asked in conference sessions. I find questions asking for specific detail, questions that require critical thinking on the part of the writer, and questions about syntactical structure. Knowing the types of questions asked in conferencing helps me to monitor how well a writer deals with the different types; in particular, the questions requiring critical thinking. I can then meet with a writer and discuss the revising done on a piece of writing.

The results of conferencing and subsequent revision of writing have been positive. Children who begin the year disliking writing learn to enjoy the challenge of process writing and leave at the end of the year with new skills and confidence. I find many children learning to ask questions of themselves when they write, a sign that they are learning to distance themselves from their writing and serve as their own audience.

As writing improves, many students send their writing to publishers; several are rewarded when their work is accepted for publication in magazines. I, too, am rewarded when a child publishes, especially a child who is in the low reading and spelling group. Self confidence soars. Some students have been winners in local contests for young writers. And all writers are published on the wall in my classroom that is reserved for writing. The curled lower corners on the pages emphasize the attraction reading one's classmates' writing holds for these students.

Students are also encouraged to make gifts of their writing to family members during the year. Often the children make covers for their writing, and I laminate the writing for permanence. Parents tell me how much they or grandparents treasure these gifts.

I find students sharing and working out problems through their writing. Writing offers a privacy that I honor when children need to share the burden of personal or family problems. In these instances, a child asks to conference only with me. These conferences give me a time alone with a child in an otherwise hectic day.

Proof of the success of conferencing is also seen each year when the school district evaluates student writing. My students always rank near the top even though many of them have limited experiences in their lives. I contribute their success mainly to the ability they have to internalize and question their own writing after several months of conferencing with other writers.

Perhaps the best testimony to the success of conferencing comes from the students themselves:

--When I conference, I know if I'm getting my feelings across.

--If I can't think of any more to say, I conference; and then I can write a lot more.

--Conferencing helps me to show, not tell.

--Conferencing gives me a sample of an audience.

--Conferencing has taught me to ask myself questions about my story.

Conferencing and revision of writing helps my students and me to know that their writing is the best that it can be.

Book for Adolescents and Teachers
Continued from page 32

Godden, Rumer. *Thursday's Children.* New York: The Viking Press, 1984. JHS
Ure, Jean. *What If They Saw Me Now?* New York: Delacorte Press. 1984. JHS

These books have some commonality: they're both about ballet training; they focus on males who dance despite social pressures. There they part company. As Jean Ure's title suggests, her protagonist, Jamie, is an unwilling victim, conned into helping his sister's dance class, worried about his image if he's discovered. Athletic, naturally rhythmical, Jamie learns quickly. Refusing to acknowledge his beginning enjoyment, he is a study of contradictions and tensions. Rumer Godden's hero, Doone, never struggles with his purpose, nor with his natural gift. His struggles are against family attitudes, finances and an envious sibling. As well as the travail of dance, Godden gives a fuller picture of the intense, demanding lessons, the tedious, constant practice, the draining tension of facing possible elimination. In the face of these, Doone pursues his dream, reaching for fulfillment.

Both boys learn through their experiences both about themselves and the larger world. And the reader, too, will learn about making choices, establishing loyalties, dedication and what it means to swim against the current. Ure's book has a stylistic lightness against Godden's complexity of plot, character and language. But both books are very good reading. Nicholas J. Karolides, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Hinton, Lynn. *Movie Guide for Puzzled Parents.* New York: Delacorte Press, 1984.

Teachers will find this book valuable in addition to the identified audience--perhaps because of the identified audience. It does provide a brief statement of the movie's content--plot and idea--and a critique. The latter in part responds to the film's quality but largely relates to audience appeal and applicability. The film reviews are organized alphabetically; these are, however, preceded by lists that group the movies in such categories as "Good Movies for All Ages," "Movies With a Strong Female Character," "Thoughtful Movies for Older Adolescents," "The Most Violent Movies," and "Unusually Repulsive Movies--the Worst of the Worst." Also there is introductory commentary, too brief and superficial in my view, that discusses many concerns about films' contents and issues. Despite this flaw, this guide will be useful to teachers who teach with movies. Ms. Hinton is the movie reviewer for McCall's Magazine. Nicholas J. Karolides, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

DRAMA AS REHERSAL FOR WRITING

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I Am Scared

I am scared because I hear army trucks going back and forth on my street, shaking my house with fear. I hear people yelling and screaming and guns shooting. I am scared. I wonder what tomorrow will be like, maybe good, but I think it will be bad. I am so scared I can't get to sleep. All I have is a little candle lit by me. The day is here. I still hear army trucks going back and forth down my street. I still hear people screaming.

I
am
scared!

A pretty powerful piece? Tammy was a fourth grade student in Fort Wayne, Indiana when she wrote those words. Tammy's story may be powerful, but what was it that scared this poor child so? What was it that kept Tammy up all night? Surely Fort Wayne, Indiana isn't a town shaking with fear as army trucks and tanks parade up and down its streets. But if not, then what sort of experience was it that enabled Tammy to write so powerfully? The answer is that it was a dramatic experience. Tammy's story was the result of a writing assignment given to her as part of a classroom drama about the declaration of martial law in Poland.[1]

Many educators, such as James Moffett (1968), John Stewig (1974) and Dorothy Heathcote (1980), have argued that there is a close relationship between the art of drama and the art of composition. As Moffett has suggested,

> . . . drama and speech are central to a language curriculum . . . I see drama as the matrix of all language activities, subsuming speech and engendering the varieties of writing and reading . . .(p. 61).

I would like to briefly examine the relationship between composition and drama by elaborating further upon the dramatic experience which prompted Tammy and many of her classmates to write stories like the one appearing at the head of this paper. I would like to use this "Polish Drama" as a window through which we may get a clearer view of how drama may be used to enhance composition.

Setting the Stage

It was shortly after martial law had been declared in Poland that I was asked to teach a drama lesson to a class of fourth graders in Fort Wayne. Since I had become very interested in the relationship between classroom drama and the teaching of writing (composition), I decided to integrate composition into my drama lesson. After much casting about for a topic, I finally settled upon using the then current crisis in Poland as the focal point of our drama.

After deciding to deal with the Polish situation I then had to figure out what type (mode) of writing I wanted these students to tackle. Did I want them to write a play, a narrative, a personal statement, or a poem?

I finally decided that a fictional journal entry might prove to be interesting. So I set about developing a drama lesson which would enable these fourth graders to write (in character) a personal reflection of how it may have felt to be a Pole on Sunday, December 13, 1981; the day martial law was declared in Poland.

Before actually initiating any dramatic activity with the children, I engaged them in a brief discussion (ten minutes) about what had happened in Poland a few weeks earlier. We talked about things such as Solidarity, the communist government, employment opportunities in Poland (jobs), union strikes, and so forth. Once we had established some of this background to the crisis in Poland, I asked the children to accept what Dorothy Heathcote (Wagner 1976) calls "the one Big Lie". I asked the children to take a few moments of silence and imagine that they were Polish workers before the declaration of martial law. Next, I asked some of the students to share their new identity with the rest of the class. What were their names? How old were they? What sort of work did they do? Did they have a family? Political views? Etc.

Once each of the children had created a character for his or her self, I then helped them create a situation which would bring all of those characters together. I decided to capitalize upon the fact that I was working in a Catholic school, and I asked the children to imagine that they were at mass in a church in Warsaw on the Sunday on which martial law was declared. Then, after briefly talking about what the church might look like and how it might feel to be in church just two weeks before Christmas, I asked the children's teacher (Sister Donna) to come to the front of the room and take on the role of a priest delivering the Sunday sermon. As the good father began his (her) sermon I sneaked to the back of the church and took my seat.

In the middle of the sermon I stood up at the back of the church and ordered the priest to "STOP!" After a brief argument with the priest I took control of the congregation, announced that I was an officer in the Polish militia, and proceeded to declare martial law upon the people of Poland, while also describing the consequences of such a declaration (i.e., curfews, curtailed travel and communications, prohibition of vodka sales, etc.).

The reaction of the congregation was initially one of dead silence. But then, as a few individuals began to protest, I once again took control of the crowd, repeated my declaration of martial law, and stormed out of the church.

When I returned to the room (as myself) I quietly turned the lights out and lit a large candle at the front of the room. Then I asked the children to accept one more "Big Lie". I told them to remain in character but to imagine that it was later on that night. I told them to think about how it would have felt to leave the church and walk home past lines of Polish soldiers and tanks. Finally, I told them to pretend that they could not sleep and that they rose in the middle of the night to write (by candlelight) in their journals about what had happened that day.

The results of this were a number of pieces similar to Tammy's. For example, Tim wrote that,

> It was a terrible sight to see all the tanks and guns all over the place. I can hear the soldiers marching in the street and I felt bad about what happened in church. I keep tossing and turning all night. I heard someone scream, it was a lady. The soldiers were taking her husband to jail because he was drinking. Tomorrow I am going to talk to the head captain. I'm going to say you can't push people around.

And Nathan, a student who had apparently struggled with writing and rarely wrote much of anything, wrote the following piece.

> My heart is broken. Today the communist military declared Martial law on my country. There is no way to describe my feeling against the communist military. My name is cadascy. I live in an old apartment on the est sid of Poland. I am a retired ship builder. I have two boys and I am married. when we walk down the street I see tanks and guns and soldiers. When you torn on the tv all you see is government tawlks.

So what? What was it about this dramatic experience which helped these fourth graders write such vivid reflections upon the crisis in Poland? In what way(s) does drama serve composition? That is the question which I would like to explore in the remainder of this paper.

Donald Murray (1968) maintains that a writer needs at least three elements if he is to be successful: information, a point of view and an appropriate form. In other words, we can't just give kids pencils and paper and ask them to write. We must first be sure that they have a topic, something to say about that topic, and a workable structure (form) for saying whatever it is they have to say. Classroom drama can provide young writers with all three of these basic elements of writing.

Drama as Information

If I had simply walked into that classroom in Fort Wayne and asked the class to write about the crisis in Poland, chances are that I would have been faced with a chorus of "but I don't know what to say." However, as it was, none of the children had any real problem finding something to write about.

The brief drama which we had created provided the children with a vicarious experience, which in turn provided their writing with a good deal of information. Tammy knew that there were now army tanks in the streets of Poland; she had experienced it. Tim knew that there were soldiers on every corner, and Nathan knew that he was a retired ship-builder, because they had experienced those things in a very dramatic, yet real, sense.

All of the students in the class now knew that the people in Poland could not be on the streets at night, that they could not travel freely, and that they could no longer hold public gatherings. The Polish drama provided these students with information about the Polish situation which they otherwise would not have had at their fingertips. Drama gave these children, and can give others, something to write about.

Drama as Voice

But it is rather obvious that Tammy, Nathan and Tim were not just recycling information which they had acquired in the course of doing the Polish drama. They had each processed that information in a very personal manner. Tammy was scared by it, Nathan was brokenhearted and Tim was apparently outraged by what had happened in Poland. In other words this dramatic experience helped each of these children develop a different point of view on the crisis in Poland. It provided each of their compositions with a definite voice.

This is perhaps one of the most significant advantages of utilizing drama as a prewriting activity. In the course of enacting a drama students are able to get on the "inside" of a story. Drama gives children a chance to walk in another person's shoes, it helps them develop another perspec-

tive, or point of view, on the topic at hand. Drama permits children to try on a variety of voices.

I structured the Polish drama so that the children would be likely to develop the voice of a Polish worker. However, I could have also structured it so that they would have developed a more "intellectual" or even "communist" point of view. Whatever the case, one only has to read Tammy's "I Am Scared" to know that this drama did provide these fourth grade compositions with some very strong voices.

Drama as Form

Finally, as Murray points out, a writer not only needs information and a point of view, but he also needs to make those elements manifest in an appropriate form. Again, drama provides teachers with a means of giving children the form they need to write successfully.

In the example described above, I knew that I wanted my students to deal with the Polish situation at a very personal level and I decided that they could do that best by writing a journal entry. Hence, I designed the drama so that would be possible. However, if I had wanted them to write a third person narrative, or an eyewitness account of the happenings in Poland, I could have cast them as journalists writing copy for an American newspaper. Or, if I had wanted them to write a dialogue, I could have asked each of them to write the whole experience up as a play.

Thus, the form of drama may provide teachers with a natural means of structuring the type of writing children do. If teachers structure their dramatic activities carefully they can expose students to a wide range of rhetorical forms without ever using labels such as "narrative," "essay," or "description." Drama may be used to give writing form.

Drama as Rehearsal

Thus far I have shown how drama may be used to provide children with the information, voice and form they often need to write. But why is drama such an effective means of fostering composition? One answer to that question is that drama is a means of rehearsal for writing. Researchers and teachers have recently begun to recognize the significance of speaking and drawing as means of rehearsal for writing (Sowers 1979; Graves 1982). However, little attention has been paid to drama as a means of rehearsal. Yet it seems as though drama may in fact combine some of the advantages of both speaking and drawing as a prewriting experience.

One of the functions of both speaking and drawing within the writing process is that they each permit children to compose without having to deal with the mechanics of writing. In talking about their stories children not only learn much about their topics, but they are also allowed to experiment (orally) with some of the language they may need when they begin to write. Indeed, the class discussion which preceeded the Polish drama served this purpose. In the course of that discussion the students were able to orally rehearse words like "Solidarity," "communist" and "martial law" which they would later use in their writings. Speaking provides children with a means of rehearsing some of the linguistic components of composition.

Drawing on the other hand seems to provide children with a means of rehearsing some of the nonlinguistic elements of composition. Whereas speech provides children with some of the words (and ideas) they need for

writing, research (Temple, Nathan and Burris, 1982) has shown that drawing allows children to discover, see and express some of the psychological and emotional aspects of a story in a nonlinguistic fashion--in a picture. In other words, both speaking and drawing function as means of rehearsal, but each does so in its own way.

However drama brings together these two different functions of rehearsal. In so far as drama incorporates the use of speech, it also permits children to rehearse some of the linguistic elements of writing. However, drama goes beyond merely talking about something, it also involves "acting it out." A drama does not only tell a story, it shows a story--much as a picture shows a story. Hence, drama not only provides children with verbal rehearsal for writing, but it also provides them with a means of rehearsing the nonverbal (psychological and emotional) elements of a story at the same time. In dramatizing the declaration of martial law in Poland the fourth graders described here were able to rehearse the nonverbal as well as the verbal elements so essential to telling that story. They were not only allowed to rehearse the language that they would need in writing their stories, but they were also able to explore the emotional, psychological and social dimensions of their stories. In brief, it may be the potential of drama to function as a means of both verbal and nonverbal rehearsal which makes it such a powerful vehicle for providing children with the information, voice and form they need to write effectively.

A Curtain Call

I have attempted to show how drama may be used within the elementary classroom to enhance children's composition. More specifically I have tried to exemplify ways in which drama may provide young writers with something to say (information), a point of view (voice) and a form (mode) in which to write. I have used a specific example of a dramatic activity done with a group of fourth graders as a vehicle for illustrating these points. However, in so doing I do not mean to imply that the example explored here is the only method one may use to integrate dramatic activities with the teaching of writing. I have not tried to provide teachers with a bag of tricks to implement in the classroom. Every teacher must arrive at her own set of methods and techniques. What I have attempted to do here is provide teachers wth a conceptual framework for trying to integrate drama into the writing curriculum.

Footnote

[1] I would like to thank Sister Donna Liette and her fourth grade class at Precious Blood School in Fort Wayne, Indiana for allowing me to undertake this project in their classroom in January of 1981.

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REVISION: BLASTING THE ROCK FACE OPEN

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Two and three years ago, I was still sweating over teaching revision. Despite my pleas, students would whip off drafts "cold" (no prewriting), then would merely touch up the punctuation (and call it rewriting). Barren as a granite rock face, their writing resisted processual growth. As a writer myself--of magazine articles--I knew revision was vital. But how to *teach* it?

My *goals* here seemed clear. (1) To raise student *awareness:* banish myths. (A) "Drafts shouldn't be 'messy'". (But, writing is rewriting!) (B) "Rewriting means you're a bad writer!" (No, the pros rewrite six times!) (C) "You should know your point before you start to write." (But, writing is processual discovery--not "sticking to your outline"!) (D) "Rewriting might make it worse." (But good student models of rewriting can show otherwise.) (E) "Rewriting means checking your word choice and mechanics." (Of course not. Revision is threefold. Besides mechanics, it's also the "style shop" of polishing: tightening wordiness, enhancing syntax, smoothing structural coherence. Third and heaviest, it's also "re-vision"--a re-seeing of the material, to add basic content, plus adjust tone towards the reader.)

Further awareness: (F) Revision is only part of a writing process which is lengthier than students think (involving prewriting to discover meaning for self, writing to fix it at first, then rewriting to deliver same to reader). But also, (G) that triple-stage model is oversimple. Writing is "recursive," intervolving; green shoots of meaning can emerge late, whereas some sentences may be finally-polished the first time they're minted. And to top it all off, very recent research finds many writers--perhaps half--"revising" in their heads before drafting.

Goal #2: to improve student *attitude*; to motivate students to rework.

And Goal #3: to improve student *ability*, ease their use of these complexities.

Not much to teach; no, not much! Especially at the *lower* levels, where students--due to cognitive immaturity--can't yet easily take the role of audience, nor read drafts with an eye to objective revision, large-scale planning. Or indeed these goals are difficult at *any* level, where unmotivated students (and unaware teachers, and rigid syllabi) conspire to "rush toward closure," to seek "the one correct way" quickly. It's almost "natural."

To teach revision better, I sought help in recent composition research. It largely didn't help. The research reports that novice writers only touch up words and mechanics, but professionals make large-scale meaning changes (not just repainting rooms in revision, but often relocating whole wings). I *know*; but how to *teach* this? (I felt like a photography teacher telling beginners that "skillful photographers never miss exact timing, plus point of view, in getting action shots." But *how*?) I came away from reading the research thinking: probably revision could *not* actually be *taught*. Probably such scanning-and-revamping could come only with maturity, plus motivation.

However, all my discontent was several years ago. Nowadays, my students seem to revise much better. How? Over recent semesters, I have worked at adapting others' research--and my own writing experience--to the classroom. This paper now shares these ways. (Of course, to be adapted differently at your levels. My students happen to be college freshmen.)

In brief, I developed four ploys for processuality. (1) First becoming *aware and able*, myself, to gain strength for the task! (2) Radically *revamping the course syllabus* and unit-plans to accommodate process, not product. (3) *Motivating* students via specific ploys (enlisting egotism, pragmatics, and sheer satisfaction). And (4) Employing student-written *models*, of process not just product, to pave the way.

Step #1--teacher-awareness--was no problem; already done. In the last few years I had published several dozen feature-articles in 15 boating and nature magazines--part of my apprenticeship to learn how to write, myself, as well as just to teach writing. To place articles, I had to revise rampantly. A "simple" 10-page article on "why I really sail," or "seamanship's three elements," often ran to 40-50 pages in drafts--80% of which were reworkings of the first draft. Still, though I knew how to revise, I still didn't know how to teach it, yet.

Step #2--syllabus-revamping, grew glacially-slow (like all curricular change?). The writing process as such flows counter to the usual class-semester procedure. True, both a manuscript and a syllabus have structure and stages. But writing is recursive (shaping-back) plus holistic (creative, then critical, also in turns). (Writing's a greenhouse, or kitchen, without simultaneous germinations and uniformly-scheduled marinatings. A syllabus is a train whose-boxcar-units are segmented, linear, sequential: we "cover" this, then "go on to" that. . . .)

I at least do *tell* students: "As you write, your *structure* is not only logical, but free-associative too. Your *pace* isn't always quick, to 'get it done,' but deliberate and speculative, too. Your *attitude* isn't always critically seeking the one right answer, but creative and seeking abundance at first. And your *tactics* aren't always active agressive hunting but receptive invitational fishing, too."

Students actually half-know much of this. They daydream, brainstorm, and know that one should "think for a day before your write," and "correct your paper a day later." But I must cinch this knowhow in three ways. In telling, as above. By showing, through models, discussed below. And by structuring the semester to culture slow growths in the "rock face" of their drafts. I adjust the pace-and-frequency of writing now, as follows:

In my old-style course, papers were "Intermittent Production Numbers"--written infrequently, with little or no prewriting, and returned with a grade--and no further work. Storms of night-before activity plus calms of no-writing. In my new approach, it's "Stewpot Simmering," *multi-staged* deadlines for the *same* paper, *built into* the syllabus. (E.g., "exploratory prewriting" of paper on, say, an authentic personal insight, due Week #4. A "discovery draft" for same, say, Week #6. Perhaps a "draft polished for specifics," Week #8. And a final-final draft perhaps as late as Week #12.) This wedged things open with a venegeance.

Here's the detailed plan; which vexed at first (students and teachers both yearning to "get things done") but later satisfied (real writing done this way).

Weeks ## 1, 2: Orientation. Cleanse students of "Engfish," the prevalent phoney style of *Themes* (polite, safe, empty papers mouthing second-

hand platitudes, on subjects such as pollution and gun control, to no reader at all). Also cleanse students of bad *personal*-style writing (the diluted and unchallenging "reverie" on "my camping trip" but so what, and the undisciplined "truism" on "how womens lib is going to far"). Then, show students how to attain authentic, challenging topics, from their own knowledge and concerns, for real readers (whether forensics, farm life now, or even flowers and football--if for real). Students use the usual topic-finding tactics (lists, brainstorming, reading) to generate a roster of a dozen valid subjects. *This preparation is vital.* Without it, the drafts soon to be written would scarcely be worth revising later on, being stunted--would scarcely even permit revision.

Then, the "Stewpot" interval. During Weeks ## 3 through 7, we produce drafts. Many drafts. Brief ones. On those good topics. And *not yet* polished or even much "corrected"! The purposes vary (explanation, description, argument, instruction). The audiences vary ("us" the class, also ignorant or hostile readers). About two drafts per week. I read them, but do *not* either correct, nor direct, extensively. I add "seed-suggestions," lightly shaping comments (restraint is vital here).

In class, during the five-week Stewpot interval, I teach prewriting, and detailing. Prewriting of course helps students generate and amass material, via its usual ploys: (1) nonstop freewriting, (2) free-associative meditation, (3) "listing 50 specifics" about topic, (4) "discovery-drafting" or "writing one's way into the subject," (5) formal modes from rhetoric books. This all fleshes out their ideas on nursing as a career; foreign exchange study; subtleties of motorcycling; whatever. *This too is a vital stage.* Without an abundant stockpile of material, their later drafts would also be stingy, hence doubly hard to revise well--even if on authentic, not phoney, topics.

I also teach specific detailing here, how to flesh out ideas by the vivid specifics that writers usually forget to insert. (I may well write that Ontario's North Channel region offers the boater "scenery," "solitude," plus "sociability"--but I'd better include some Japanese-orange sunsets with inky black pine trees and loon calls; plus 37 boats partying in a football-field-sized cove. . . .)

I adhere to a two-stage linear sequence model here. I tell students to write these first drafts for audience of *themselves* to discover and clarify their meaning. If they "revise" now, it should be for Murray's "internal revision," to make sense of subject to *self*. These drafts are still "writer-based," cast in the authors' own points of view. Which is okay; all in good time. The next stage, Weeks ## 7-9, involves teaching audience-analysis--how to assess *reader's* image of subject and his/her opinions--and reach those. Now, students begin swinging the Stewpot drafts toward "reader-based" prose, practicing "external" revision to make subject clear to target *audience*. ("Spot your reader's ignorances plus misconceptions regarding your subject of giving blood donations.") This two-stage pacing guides students.

Then Weeks ## 11-out involve the "Style Shop." This involves tightening wordiness; enhancing coherence via pervasive parallelism; adjusting syntax; and fine-tuning the pace, flow, proportion. (The letters to the editor about study areas on campus, the exploratory essays on religion, now read less like a dog-legged scramble through a jungle, and more like a short-cut paved road with frequent signposts.)

Thus the revamped semester--with built-in growth-pockets. Does it work? Do *students themselves* come to see what to revise and improve? Well,

compared with before, most certainly. I have placed those "seed-comments" on the drafts, such as "relate this sports-equipment piece more to your audience--see unit Week 8." But students themselves see things. They're admirably helped in understanding my instruction on detailing, audience, structure, by having in front of them a draft of their own in which they indigenously attempted these very skills already.

I do have to enforce things via four course rules. (1) During Weeks 4-7, I do *not* correct mechanics in the drafts--nor even permit students to worry about "rules" of writing (sentence length--long, short? etc.) This is to break students of the rule-mongering habit with which they enter the course and which can crimp their writing process. (Final drafts must be letter-perfect, of course. But again, all in good time and through stages.) (2) I give *no* final letter grade (just working estimates) until a paper is good and finally ready--finished at last. (3) I require all drafts to include all previous prewritings, stapled to it. (This reaffirms writing as process, lets me spot problems in skimpy prewritings, and lets me reward scrupulous writing at all stages.) Relatedly, (4) I grade not only on final product, but on carefully-worked drafts too.

So much for the revamped syllabus. And as for motivation?

Why is it that my students now prewrite and rewrite more willingly--well, at least non-"balkingly"? I don't fully know. (1) Maybe my *own positive attitude* toward it--I see writing not as dour correctness, a minefield to cross, but as a glad challenge, like a space shot or the contest of a downhill slalom. (2) Maybe students egotism and *self-esteem*--they value their classmates' good opinions of their writing. (3) Maybe the *puzzle-challenge,* plus *aesthetic* appeal, of good craftsmanship, of seeing turgid, muddy writing finally flow more sparklingly. (4) Maybe a semi-*moral values*: don't bore or confuse your reader! (5) Maybe *pragmatics* (they see that sloppy letters and memos harm one on the job). (6) And maybe realistic *need*--I don't request good writing, I require it.

Toward that last, I employ three tactics to spike motivation. (1) *Peer-group* sessions, plus "*publication*" of best work in "showcase" anthologies. (2) *Student*-selected writing topics, from their own knowledge and concerns, *not* assigned material on literature or Great Issues. Why? For their "juice," and for my own "judo" too. Propriate topics give their writers a reservoir of interest, which the teacher can then enlist in enforcing revision. On an imposed topic (computers and "alienation"; nature and the city in Frost's poetry), I can't realistically require dedicated reworking. But I *can* say to Marie or Mark, "Look *you chose* to write on diabetes and your family (or, moving to a farm; being a coach; or whatever). I didn't force you to. And you knew your paper had to be good, as those samples we read. So go now and do more on the topic--make this better!" Self-selected topics thus fuel student ability to respond to teacher leverage thus.

And motivational tactic #3, relatedly: *enforce* and *require* reworkings. Here, I take the role of coach. I must custom-estimate (A) just how much or little each student can do, neither pampering nor overtaxing them. (I judge that Dave is really done with his description of his plane trip, but that Dorothy can and should reconsider her true feelings toward her aunt.) I must also estimate (B) just how much specific guidance vs. "vague" pushing, to give. ("Tom, your food-service paper needs about six more specific examples, like this one." But, "Terry, your paper about deer hunting just hasn't found its true subject or focus yet. Now *you* go and find it.") This coaching role takes time and energy, but does foster self-revision.

So much for syllabus and motivation, too. Now as for models. I don't mean final-product models; I mean multi-stage, processual models. Although "process" is the composition-teaching buzzword today, *no* textbooks I know, yet demonstrate (as against just mention) processuality via models. Yet I find models vital--not only to inspire, but actually to enable, students. The models I employ first show the whole process at a glance, then subtleties of revision.

(1) *Whole Process Briefly.* I use a simple article that I wrote, an interview of a Michigan boatbuilder for *National Fisherman*. Simple: straightforward, no "discovery through rewriting," but quite complex enough for students at first. Upon a 6 by 8 foot cardboard, I pasted it *all* up. Assignment letter, pre-interview questions, the interview's notes, then those recopied onto 5 X 8 cards, an "outline," the first draft with its modest rewritings, another fine-tuned draft, then the article as *NF* printed it. The first day of every writing class, I lug this billboard in and flash it. Students sit amazed, naive as they are about process. "A lotta work!" Yeah, but really a method, a tool. . . . and it works. *Simply seeing* how writing *is* profitably "messy" and multi-staged helps banish their myths, drop old ways, grow.

(2) *More Complex Prewriting.* In Week #3, I hand out a 20-page packet consisting of all the writing I did to produce my own 500-word essay about "Jogging." The packet *shows* my use of the five prewriting ploys to discover subject, assemble data. Also rewriting. Again it works; students fairly beg to take the packet home to use as a guide through this "so-new" way of writing through stages.

(3) *Revision.* Again, skillful models score. Tightening wordiness? The students see how Cynthia's 500-word letter about "building an auditorium" is reduced to 75 crisp words saying the same thing better, omitting nothing except the fat-and-fluff, via six identifiable anti-wordiness techniques. This both motivates, and enables, students to distill and channel their own meandering drafts.

And as for the most subtle re-seeing, models also help here. An excellent example is in Erika Lindemann's *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers* (Oxford, 1982). Pp. 184-87 offer versions of a paragraph of hers, showing how writers revise "to redefine their purpose and audience, reassess the message, reshape the discourse, and realign their meaning with linguistic forms." I also use three student models which vividly show writing as "discovering whole new real subject" *during* writing. Randy started writing about buying a used car, swerved toward "assertiveness and realism" as the main point. Tracy went from vegetarian sandwiches into recollections about friends. And Patti wrote through "doing the laundry," on into "over-mechanization today."

The point of these models is that they *actually show it all happening right on the page.* The halts; the shifts; the breakthroughs; the further corrections. And most of my students are seeing these things for the first time ever.

I still question whether we can *directly* teach lower-level students the subtleties of process, especially of revision as re-seeing. This stepping-back from the page, this scanning, this writing toward a large plan held in mind--this all requires much maturity and motivation, too. But I do now believe that we *can* release our students' existing and emerging potentialities in these directions. We can fracture a bit the rock face of those drafts. By rebedding the course to nurture revision. By using models to show how. And by motivating, including our attitude that revising--and writing--is not for dour correctness, but for dynamic effectiveness.

BOOKS

FOR CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND TEACHERS

Morton Rhue, *The Wave*. New York: Delacorte, 1981. 143 pp. Jr. and Sr. High School

In 1969, in Palo Alto, California, a high school history teacher named Ron Jones carried out an experiment aimed at helping his students to gain a deeper understanding of Naziism than he believed they could attain through conventional methods of study. He had shown a documentary film about the Nazi death camps, and, in the discussion that followed, his students had asked questions about how the Germans could have permitted the Nazis to do what they did. Jones tried to answer, but found his explanations unsatisfactory.

In an effort to pursue the matter in another way, he began the next day to simulate certain Nazi activities in class--e.g., having his students march about, snap to attention while reciting--on the pretext of wanting to teach about discipline as a source of personal strength and effectiveness. His students warmed quickly to Jones's lessons, and Jones responded by further elaboration-teaching his class to chant slogans, to salute, to monitor one another for signs of disloyalty to the group, and to recruit new members from the student body at large. Soon the group--The Wave--gained momentum of its own and came to dominate activities in the school, with Wave members coercing and bullying non-members in an effort to compel conformity. Frightened by what he had wrought, Jones brought it to a stop by assembling the Wave members for a rally where he confronted them with a huge image of Hitler. Hitler, he told them, would have approved of their recent actions. Facism, he hoped they now had learned, "is right here, in all of us." He then admonished them to think independently in the future, not to follow groups or leaders blindly.

The Wave is a fictional account of these events. With 1984 upon us, and with continuing concern about the susceptibility of young people to cult activity and group-dominated thinking, it is worthwhile to consider the contribution that school-sponsored uses of *The Wave* might make to education about totalitarian movements. The most obvious step teachers might take would be to explore the analogy that the book puts forward: The Wave is like Naziism--to the extent that any of us resembles the students who embraced the Wave, we also have seeds of Naziism in us. Discussion of the analogy probably would turn to whether in fact the Palo Alto students would have been won over so easily--whether, in other words, the analogy is warranted by the psychology and dynamics of adolescence.

It would be even better, however, for teachers to go beyond the text, pointing out that the analogy proposed in *The Wave* is incomplete in that it does not touch on Naziism as a popular revolution in which wealth, jobs, and power were taken from Jews and re-distributed among non-Jewish Germans. The losses were not merely psychological, the motives not merely temperamental, the pressures not merely to conform. This side of Naziism should not be omitted from a study program for adolescents.

Richard Western, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Cernohous, Wayne J. *Millie Milkweed Seed*. River Falls: Kinnickinnic Press, 1984.

How does the cycle of nature operate? Specifically, how does one plant propagate in the wild? The milkweed's cycle is personified through Millie, a single seed, whose progress we follow from her nestled enclosure in the seedpod to her own production of blossoms. The progress is heightened by dramatic incidents which, beyond increasing interest, reflect the vicissitudes of nature: not all seeds make it. Inserted in the text are bits of nature information to establish the science facts, e.g., what causes the milkweed pods to open; and the language of the text incorporates visual imagery that enlivens appropriately the science content, e.g. ". . . just above the reach of the fading fingers of the meadow's wind-curved broom grasses." The wash illustrations by Helen Bryant Wyman are sensitive, depicting clearly the open meadow, focusing effectively on close-up studies of individual plants. Altogether, the book succeeds in charming this science lesson into the minds of its young readers.

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